



September 2006

DRAFT Bachelor of Arts in Japanese Western Washington University

Introduction

Western Washington University (WWU) seeks Higher Education Coordinating Board approval to offer a Bachelor of Arts degree in Japanese. The program would offer students an opportunity to contribute to the region by providing linguistic, cultural, and social skills important in preparing graduates for jobs in a variety of industries that rely on global trade. The program would begin enrolling students in fall 2006.

Relationship to Institutional Role and Mission and the Strategic Master Plan

The program would draw on the strength of the existing undergraduate minor in Japanese Language and Culture with an emphasis on developing high levels of proficiency in language and communication skills. The program is consistent with the mission of Western Washington University providing students with “skills useful in a rapidly changing and highly technical world.” The program would seek to educate internationally aware global citizens. Graduates would be prepared to work in diverse communities at home and bring skills and knowledge to organizations involved in economic development, trade, and commerce with international partners, especially with our key trading partners in Asia.

The programmatic goals are consistent with the goals of the *Statewide Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education* of providing opportunities for students to earn degrees, and responding to the state’s economic needs. The strength of Washington’s economy is founded in large part on trade with partners around the Pacific Rim. The proposed program would provide students with an understanding of Japanese language and culture that would provide them a range of opportunities in organizations involved in international trade and commerce.

Program Need

The BA in Japanese program responds to needs expressed by students, employers, and community stakeholders. The *State and Regional Needs Assessment* anticipates growth in the humanities as part of the overall growth in the higher education system. While the study of world languages is not specifically cited in the needs assessment, Japanese language teachers are

in short supply in the K-12 system, and given Washington's proximity and trading relationships with a number of Asian countries, an understanding of Japanese language and culture would be an asset to a number of organizations.

Student interest in the program was assessed through multiple approaches. The program developers reviewed enrollment trends in advanced Japanese language courses and found an increase of 25 percent over a four-year period. The department also conducted a survey of first and second year Japanese language students in 2004. Of those responding, 35 indicated that they would be interested in a Japanese language major. Experience of students who designed their own degrees through the "student-faculty designed major" is further evidence of demand. Over the past seven years, 21 students have completed a curriculum similar to the program currently under review. In addition, in 2004, 41 students enrolled in related programs including Linguistics and East Asian studies majors with a focus on Japanese. Program developers would expect some portion of these students to select the Japanese major. The University of Washington also indicated that their Japanese programs routinely turn away qualified applicants and there is a need for greater capacity for Japanese majors in Washington.

The program developers indicate that graduates with advanced language and cultural skills are in high demand among employers. Given the proximity to the Pacific Rim and the importance of Japan and other Asian nations to our state's economic vitality, students would be able to prepare for a wide range of occupations. Demand is expected to be especially high in banking and technology occupations. Community organizations, the Consulate-General of Japan at Seattle, and companies in the region, have consistently supported departmental events and are kept informed about the planned program development.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction indicates "some shortage" for Japanese teachers. In its report *2004 Educator Supply and Demand in Washington State*, OSPI reported 20 openings for world language teachers with a specialization in Japanese. Students wishing to enter teaching would need to meet additional requirements, including completion of an appropriate teacher certification program.

The proposed program would not unnecessarily duplicate programs currently offered in the region. Currently the University of Washington and Central Washington University offer Japanese, and in 2004-05, awarded a combined total of 28 degrees in Japanese Language and Literature. The program has received support from the University of Washington as one of the required external reviews and also has received a letter of support from Central Washington University.

Program Description

The BA in Japanese program draws on the strengths of the current undergraduate minor with an emphasis in language and communication. The curriculum includes a strong language component as well as instruction in "content" areas that would provide students with background on Japanese history and culture.

The program curriculum has already been through the institutional review and approval process. Most of the required courses have been offered in the past; however, much of the senior year coursework is new. A number of the courses are offered primarily in Japanese, and as a result, language proficiency is strongly emphasized in the curriculum.

Student who complete the first year Japanese sequence, and maintain at least a 2.5 GPA, would be eligible for admission to the program. Once admitted, students would complete a total of 55 credits within the major including 48 credits of required coursework and seven elective credits within Japanese. Students would have a range of options to complete additional electives within the department or from other areas to round out their course of study for a total of 180 credits. With appropriate planning students would have an opportunity to complete a minor in another area or to double major. As part of their curriculum, students in the program are strongly encouraged, though not required, to take advantage of a foreign study opportunity in Japan.

Successful completion of the program would prepare graduates for a broad range of careers. Humanities graduates generally prove to be quite versatile in the range of occupations they enter; the specific skills in language and culture developed in this program would be especially marketable and provide a strong foundation for careers in a number of fields.

The program would accommodate 5 FTE students in the first year and grow to 30 FTE at full enrollment in year 5. The program would be delivered by existing faculty, two tenure track positions and one visiting professor. Based on feedback from the reviewers the institution has committed to the conversion of the visiting faculty position to a tenure track position. In addition, the department has committed to add non-tenure track faculty, as needed, to deliver curriculum.

Due to the sequential nature of the coursework, student assessment will be ongoing within individual courses and as the student progresses through the program. The curriculum clearly defines student outcomes and levels of proficiency for the program as a whole. Students would be assessed through oral and written examinations, class work, and writing assignments.

The program would be assessed through a process implemented for the department as a whole, which includes student feedback through surveys, exit interviews, and an alumni survey. In addition, faculty would assess the program and employers would assess graduates. The program also would track measurable outcomes such as time to degree, retention, and completion rates.

Diversity

The program would participate in and support Western Washington University's campus-wide effort to enhance and support diversity on campus. The program itself would likely attract a diverse student population, including students with Japanese heritage who are interested in developing their language skills and/or understanding of Japanese history and culture. The department sponsors "Japan Week" which is a celebration of Japanese language and culture that attracts support and participation from throughout the region.

External Review

The program was reviewed by two external experts, Matsuo Soga, Professor Emeritus, The University of British Columbia, Professor Emeritus, Nagoya University of Foreign Studies and Amy Snyder Ohta, Associate Professor of Japanese, University of Washington.

Both reviewers indicated support for the program, citing student demand for the program and the need for graduates with the skills developed within the program. In addition, both reviewers articulated a need for more faculty to deliver the curriculum effectively. In response to this second concern, the program developers have added temporary faculty to deliver the first year of the program, and they have been responsive to reviewers concerns by adding additional faculty resources.

Professor Soga applauded the program citing the quality of the existing offerings as evidenced by the preparation of students who had completed Japanese coursework at WWU then studied at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies. Soga also noted the quality of the existing faculty at WWU, indicating every confidence that they would put on a high quality program.

Professor Ohta emphasized the need for such a program to meet student demand. She indicated that the University of Washington turns away many good students and that additional capacity for the study of Japanese is sorely needed. Ohta also discussed the need for additional faculty and expressed concern about the depth and breadth of the program, especially in the content areas. Her concerns centered on three key issues, whether there were enough required courses, whether the “content” courses would have sufficient depth if taught in Japanese, and that study abroad was not a requirement.

The program developers responded to her comments in detail, making some modifications to courses based on concerns raised in the review. The program developers maintain that the emphasis on language proficiency early in the curriculum does prepare students for the advanced coursework, and in fact, the curriculum was designed with the proficiency of students who complete the existing series of courses in mind. The program developers assert that the curriculum would provide the appropriate level of depth and breadth consistent with other language majors offered at the institution. That said, the department also indicated that they would closely monitor the degree to which students were able to engage in their senior level content courses and would formally review the courses after they are taught for the first time. The program would maintain the existing recommendation that students engage in a term abroad but would not add this as a requirement.

The program received letters of support from Eastern Washington University and Central Washington University.

Program Costs

The program would enroll five FTE students in the first year and grow to 30 FTE in the second year. Existing faculty would provide instruction. Three FTE faculty positions would be assigned to the program, and two staff would contribute 10 percent of their time to the program for .2 FTE staff support.

No capital improvements are required for the implementation of the program.

Total cost for the program is \$37,685 per FTE in the first year and \$6,280 per FTE at full enrollment in year five, which is similar to the cost of the “arts and letters” bachelor’s programs offered at WWU, which average \$5,920 in direct costs.

Staff Analysis

The proposed program would support the unique role and mission of the institution by providing students with an opportunity to engage in a curriculum that would prepare them to live and work in a global economy. It would supply them with skills and knowledge needed to work in a broad range of occupations, especially those in international trade and commerce.

The program also supports the *Strategic Master Plan* goals by providing opportunities for students to earn degrees. It would respond to the economic needs of the state by producing students who are qualified to work in a global environment. Those knowledgeable of the language and culture of Pacific Rim nations would contribute to the state’s economic growth and development.

The program draws on an experienced and well-qualified faculty and has responded to reviewers concerns by adding faculty resources. In addition, the proposal outlines a well-defined student level assessment system with clear learning. The proposal lays out an assessment approach for the program as a whole, involving a variety of stakeholders including students, employers, and faculty.

The program responds to demonstrated student, employer, and community needs; which is consistent with the state and regional needs assessment and the institution’s own assessment of need.

The proposal references institution wide diversity efforts but does not provide an explicit plan to attract and retain a diverse student body to the major. Implementation of the proposal will require further planning in the development of communication and outreach activities to attract and retain a diverse group of students.

The program would not unnecessarily duplicate existing programs and would be offered at a reasonable cost.

Recommendation

Based on careful review of the program proposal and supplemental sources, HECB staff recommend approval of the Bachelor of Arts in Japanese at Western Washington University, effective fall 2006.

RESOLUTION NO. 06-24

WHEREAS, Western Washington University proposes to offer a Bachelor of Arts in Japanese;
and

WHEREAS, The programmatic goals are consistent with the goals of the *Statewide Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education* of providing opportunities for students to earn degrees, and responding to the state's economic needs; and

WHEREAS, The program would respond to demonstrated student demand and provide students linguistic, cultural, and social skills important in preparing graduates for jobs in a variety of industries that rely on global trade; and

WHEREAS, The program draws on an experienced and well-qualified faculty, and

WHEREAS, The program is founded on a set of clearly defined outcomes for the program and individual students, and sets out a means to track student progress and the success of the program over time; and

WHEREAS, The costs are reasonable.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Higher Education Coordinating Board approves the Bachelor of Arts in Japanese, effective fall 2006.

Adopted:

September 27, 2006

Attest:

Gene Colin, Chair

Jesus Hernandez, Secretary